

LAKE CREEK SALVAGE TIMBER SALE

INITIAL PROPOSAL

AUGUST 4, 2008

SECTION: 35 & 36
TOWNSHIP: 11 North
RANGE: 7EAST
ACREAGE RANGE: 650 to 800 acres

REQUEST RESPONSE DATE: September 15, 2008

PROPOSAL:

The Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, Central Land Office - Helena Unit, is proposing a salvage timber sale on approximately 650 to 800 acres of forested State Trust Lands. The proposed project area is located approximately ten miles northeast of White Sulphur Springs Montana, in Meagher County.

PROJECT NEED:

The lands involved in this proposed project are held by the State of Montana in trust for the support of specific beneficiary institutions such as public schools, state colleges and universities, and other specific state institutions such as the School for the Deaf and Blind (Enabling Act of February 22, 1889; 1972 Montana Constitution, Article X, Section 11). The Board of Land Commissioners and the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation are required by law to administer these trust lands to produce the largest measure of reasonable and legitimate return over the long run for these beneficiary institutions (Section 77-1-202, MCA). On May 30th, 1996, the Department released the Record of Decision on the State Forest Lands Management Plan (the Plan). The land board approved the Plan's implementation on June 17, 1996. The Plan outlines the management philosophy of the DNRC in the management of state forested trust lands, as well as sets out specific Resource Management Standards for ten resource categories.

The Department will manage the lands involved in this project according to the Administrative Rules for State Forest Land Management (ARM36.11.401 through 450).

The Rules implement the philosophy and standards of the State Forest Land Management Plan (SFLMP), which states: Our premise is the best way to produce long-term income for the trust is to manage intensively for healthy and biologically diverse forests. Our understanding is that a diverse forest is a dynamic forest that will produce the most reliable and highest long-term revenue stream. In the foreseeable future, timber management will continue to be DNRC's primary source of revenue and primary tool for achieving biodiversity objectives.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES:

In order to meet the goals of the management philosophy adopted through programmatic review in the Plan, the Department has set the following project objectives:

1. Salvage/utilize Douglas-fir that has been damaged by Western Spruce Budworm on approximately 552 acres.
2. Salvage/utilize lodgepole pine damaged by mountain pine beetle on approximately 92 acres.
3. Overstory removal/pre-commercial thin approximately 143 acres of Douglas-fir and lodgepole pine established in 1989.
4. Restore and improve forest health and vigor.
5. Provide cash revenue flow for the school trust fund.

EXISTING CONDITIONS / PROPOSED ACTIONS:

Western Spruce Budworm is having an impact on Douglas-fir health and vigor within the proposed harvest area as defoliation is readily detected. Branch dieback, top-kill and tree mortality could result if budworm populations continue to increase. In addition mountain pine beetle is prevalent in lodgepole pine with tree mortality being detected (brown patches) on the landscape. Adjacent property managers are planning salvage timber sales to capture the loss associated with this infestation, while trying to increase overall forest health and vigor.

- Access to the proposed salvage timber sale on State Trust Lands in Section 35 & 36, Township 11 North, Range 7 East, is through U.S. Forest Service Lands managed by the Kings Hill District of the Lewis & Clark National Forest. A road use permit would need to be acquired from the Forest Service to use the existing road.
- Established roads (4.33 miles) to many of the harvest units already exist. They may require minimal reconstruction and maintenance to safely facilitate semi-truck travel. Approximately 5.8 miles of new road would be constructed to facilitate tractor harvesting equipment, being abandoned after use.
- An estimated harvest volume of 5MMBF to 6.5MMBF is expected from the proposed Lake Creek Salvage Timber Sale. Silvicultural prescriptions may include the implementation of:
 - a. Intermediate treatments ~ Douglas-fir
 - b. Overstory removal / Pre-commercial thin ~ Douglas-fir, lodgepole pine
 - c. Even-aged regeneration harvests.
 - Seed Tree ~ Douglas-fir
 - Shelterwood ~ Douglas-fir
 - Clearcut ~ Lodgepole pine
- A post-harvest weed spray program would be implemented to control possible spread of noxious weeds along the access route.

COMMENTS:

Contacting the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, c/o Shawn P. Morgan, 8001 North Montana Avenue, Helena, Montana 59602, phone 406-458-3516, or email at shmorgan@mt.gov to make comments or if further assistance and clarification are needed.



Lake Creek Salvage ~ Timber Sale Proposal
Sections 35 & 36, T11N, R7E

